

1 June 1956

Memorandum for the Files

Subject: H. R. 9534 and H. R. 9535 (bills to pay for repair of bomb damage to the Vatican).

1. These bills are identical, and were introduced on February 27, 1956 by John McCormack and Joe Martin. They were drafted in such a way as to permit direct reference to the Appropriations Committees. Inasmuch as they contain both authorizing and appropriations language, Chairman Cannon of the Appropriations Committee insisted upon a prior reference to the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

2. The House Foreign Affairs Committee is due to report one of the bills out on June 1 or thereabouts, and the Committee staff informed me that Floor action could be expected during the early part of the week of June 4. After it passes the House it still has to go to the Appropriations Committee, and Floor action will again be necessary if the bill is favorably reported by that Committee.

3. I am not familiar with the exact contents of the State Department letter from Assistant Secretary Hill to the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. I am informed by Mr. O'Connor, however, that it is essentially a "no objection" letter. The State Department in fact drafted these two bills, but this was done as a personal service to the Congressmen who were to introduce it. As I understand it, the official State Department line has been that the United States Government does not concede that it has a firm obligation to repair this damage. In view of the fact that this has been the official Government position for a number of years, the State Department does not feel that they can now state their affirmative support for these bills, although Mr. O'Connor told me that the letter was drafted to go as far as possible in this direction without actually doing so.

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Legislative Counsel

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